

Frome Urban District Council.

REPORT of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year ending December 31st, 1906.

To the Members of the Frome Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN.—I am glad to be able to send you a satisfactory report for the past year. It was from every point of view most unusually healthy. The weather was beautiful and the number of hours of sunshine unprecedented, and yet there was never any serious drought, the rainfall always being sufficient to nourish the land and keep away microbes. There were only three wet months—January, October and November. For once I think the farmers do not grumble and I hope have had a prosperous season in every way. I append statistics of the monthly rainfall.

	Inches.	Inches.	Inches.
Jan. ...	6·36	May ...	2·52
Feb. ...	3·20	June ...	2·92
Mar. ...	1·92	July ...	1·07
Apr. ...	1·33	Aug. ...	1·45
Total—	1906, 36·86 ;	1905, 26·17 ;	1904, 30·40.

The registered number of births was 229, as against 255 in 1905, 213 in 1904, and 258 in 1903. This is a low birth-rate. But I do not think it is necessarily regrettable, and I do not agree with the opinion so often propounded that this tends to the decadence of a nation. For if the mass of the people produce less children those that are born are mostly better fed and provided for, and become stronger and better citizens. The male births were 118, and the female 111, the proportion between male and female being normal. There were 14 illegitimate births, 11 in the Workhouse and 3 outside. The general birth-rate has fallen. In the past year it was 20·37, against 22·27 in 1905, and 19·06 in 1904. We are far below the average for England and Wales.

We have had less notifiable disease than in 1905, 16 cases in 14 houses as against 23 cases in 18 houses, but no widespread epidemic, and I have not had to recommend the closure of any elementary schools. Influenza appeared in the last month but in a mild form—troublesome however—and affecting mostly the larynx.

The zymotic death-rate is higher than last year owing to the number of sporadic cases of diphtheria, but it is low in comparison with most towns. Diphtheria has not appeared in epidemic form; it has not spread from house to house, and as usual has affected members of the same family. The etiology of this disease is always obscure. There was reason at one time to attribute it to milk from a certain locality, and later a large proportion of the notified cases were attending a certain school. Suggestions were made to the authorities for minimising the risk of infection, and these were cheerfully complied with. Your Inspector has been most prompt in dealing with all sanitary matters. We have no cases left in the town, the last notified being early in December.

The notifications were scarlatina 2, diphtheria 14, of the latter 5 were treated at the Isolation Hospital, all with success. 150

deaths were registered in 1906. This is the lowest number on record, especially as the population of the district is increasing.

Here are the tables of time, age, and causation.

		1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
(I.)	Jan., Feb., March	... 53	... 47	... 45	... 44
	April, May, June	... 37	... 40	... 43	... 49
	July, August, Sept.	... 34	... 32	... 25	... 28
	Oct., Nov., Dec.	... 45	... 41	... 43	... 29
		—	—	—	—
		169	160	156	150
		—	—	—	—

		1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
(II.)	Under 1 year	... 31	... 15	... 20	... 16
	From 1 to 5 years	... 13	... 5	... 8	... 4
	“ 5 to 15 years	... 5	... 6	... 4	... 10
	“ 15 to 25 years	... 7	... 6	... 2	... 3
	“ 25 to 65 years	... 37	... 46	... 42	... 44
	Over 65 years	... 76	... 82	... 80	... 73
		—	—	—	—
		169	160	156	150
		—	—	—	—

		1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
(III.)	Zymotic diseases	... 16	... 2	... 8	... 6
	Other Septic	... 1	... 1	... 3	... 6
	Tubercular	... 18	... 18	... 6	... 10
	Malignant	... 11	... 16	... 11	... 5
	Apoplexy	... 13	... 8	... 11	... 5
	Nervous system	... 8	... 5	... 7	... 8
	Circulatory system	... 23	... 19	... 16	... 18
	Respiratory organs	... 15	... 22	... 25	... 20
	Digestive organs	... 13	... 5	... 7	... 2
	Excretory organs	... 2	... 9	... 10	... 5
	Alcoholism and cirrhosis of liver	... 2	... 1	... 2	... 3
	Premature birth	... 2	... 5	... 5	... 3
	Age	... 39	... 41	... 39	... 36
	Injuries	... 5	... 0	... 3	... 4
	All other causes	... 5	... 8	... 8	... 9
		—	—	—	—
		169	160	156	150
		—	—	—	—

		1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
(IV.)	Zymotic diseases :				
	Enteric fever	... 1	... 0	... 0	... 0
	Measles	... 7	... 0	... 0	... 1
	Scarlatina	... 0	... 0	... 0	... 0
	Diarrhoea	... 2	... 2	... 1	... 3
	Whooping cough	... 6	... 0	... 2	... 0
	Diphtheria	... 0	... 0	... 2	... 2
		—	—	—	—
		16	2	5	6
		—	—	—	—

(V.) Causes of infantile deaths :

	1906.	1906.	
Zymotic	... 2	Respiratory	... 4
Congenital	... 5	Others	... 3
Malnutrition	2		

This is a new table required by the Local Government Board.

Forty deaths were registered from Public Institutions in the district. In the Union Workhouse Infirmary 32, and in the Victoria Hospital 8; of these 15 were non-residents.

I have calculated the death-rate on a population of 11,240. This is, I think, approximately correct.

	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
General death-rate per 1,000 living	... 15·16	... 14·32	... 13·901	... 13·34
Ditto, allowing for non-residents	... 13·62	... 13·159	... 13·012	... 12·01
Zymotic death-rate	... 1·43	... 1·79	... 2·67	... 5·33
Infantile death-rate per 1,000 births	120·15	70·15	78·43	69·86

This is all very satisfactory. The general death-rate is lower than I have ever known, and I think must be almost a record in any urban district; in the month of December it was only 6! I wish to call your attention to the decrease in malignant disease, which you will see by the tables, is less by one half than in any year in recent times. The deaths from tubercular disease continue to be at a low average. Old people also have lived to be older.

The infantile death-rate is also very low. I regret the increase of the zymotic death-rate, from the past two years; it is however inconsiderable.

The town water supply is as plenteous and good as ever. There has been an improvement in our drainage system. The number of inhabited houses is on the increase, and dilapidated premises have been removed. Generally the ventilation of stuffy houses has been enforced, and I sincerely trust that this has been taken advantage of by the occupiers.

The general work in the town will be found in the admirable report of your Sanitary Inspector.

The Isolation Hospital has proved exceedingly useful. Five cases of diphtheria were removed there, and I think the existence of this institution may have done much to check the spread of the disease by the prompt removal of those affected.

I rejoice to know that a scheme for sewage disposal has been adopted and that the work will shortly be commenced. I have had numerous complaints from private individuals, and though, as I said last year, I do not think any definite disease has arisen from the effluvia from the low lying sewer, yet I know it has been an undeniable nuisance and cause of great discomfort.

I think still that it is imperative to insist on a water flush for closets.

I have had many samples of water sent to me. In six cases the town supply was ordered to be substituted. The bake-houses are clean and well kept—one which was underground and did not comply with the requisitions has been closed. This remark also applies to the milkshops, dairies, and cowsheds.

In conclusion I thank you, gentlemen, for your courtesy and consideration, and the members of the sanitary staff for the assistance they have given me.

Your obedient Servant,

FREDERICK PARSONS,

Medical Officer.

February 25th, 1907.

THE FROME

Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year 1906.

FROME RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1906.**

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit the following Report on the Public Health of the Frome Rural District for the year ending December 31st, 1906.

I append to this Report Five Tabulated Statements as required by the Local Government Board, and I am sending Copies of the Report and the Tables to the Local Government Board and the Somerset County Council.

The VITAL STATISTICS of the District for this year cannot very well be compared with those of the previous years, as this is only the fifth complete year in which the area and population have not been affected by the absorption into the Frome Urban District of a certain portion of the Selwood Parish.

From the Tables enclosed, the following facts appear:—

AREA OF DISTRICT—51,448 Acres.

POPULATION—11,118.

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES—2,650.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSE—4·2.

OCCUPATION— Agriculture and Coal Mining.

	1906.	1905.	1904.	1903.	1902.
BIRTH RATE per 1000 living ...	22	22·5	20	20·5	22·1
DEATH RATE " " ...	11·5	10	11·4	13	13
ZYMOTIC RATE " " ...	·7	·3	·3	·3	1·
INFANT MORTALITY per 1000 births ...	72	72	63	81	65

The above Statistics are based upon the population shown in the last census, and I know of no exceptional circumstances that would materially alter the population in any part of the District.

BIRTHS.—The total number of Births is 240: Males 113; Females 127; of these 18 died under 1 year of age.

DEATHS.—The total number of Deaths registered during the year was 126; as compared with an average of 125 for the previous three years. The Death Rate is 11·5 per 1000 living, being a slight increase on last year.

The CAUSES OF DEATH at all ages were as follows:—

The AGES at which DEATH occurred were as follows:-

The INFANT MORTALITY is again *below* the average. 18 infants having died under the age of 1 year, making the Infant Mortality rate 72 per 1000 births. The causes of these 18 early deaths were as follows:—

The INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT has been in force in the District since 1890, and works well, and is of great value in giving immediate information of Infectious Disease, and thus enabling steps to be taken to check the spread of the same, and the record of cases serves as an index of the sanitary condition of the various localities.

During the past year 26 cases have been notified throughout the whole District, viz. :—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Enteric	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
									26

1 case of Diphtheria proved fatal. The above cases were distributed as follows :—

Diphtheria :—1 case at Farleigh in May.
1 case at Writhlington in June.
1 case at Witham in June.
3 cases at Egford in August.
1 case at Road in August.
2 cases at Vobster in December.

Erysipelas :—1 case at Coleford in January.
1 case at Writhlington in February.
1 case at Vobster in May.
1 case at Lipyeat in September.
1 case at Heinington in October.
1 case at Kilmersdon in October.
1 case at Nunney in November.

Scarlet Fever :—5 cases at Huish in February.
1 case at Writhlington in March.

Enteric :—1 case at Norton St. Philip in July.
3 cases at Vobster in October.

In every case where an Infectious Disease has been notified, I have, without delay, visited the house and made all possible arrangements for the home isolation of the case ; I also send to the occupier of the house a printed notice calling attention to the Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890, and also a printed form of instructions for home isolation ; I also send a printed notice to the Inspector, who provides disinfectants and visits the house from time to time to see that my instructions to the occupier are properly carried out. A notice is also sent, if necessary, to the Head Teacher of the local School, warning him not to admit children to the School from the infected house ; by these means we endeavour to stop the spread of infection, without an Isolation Hospital, and we do so with considerable success. At the termination of the illness, the Inspector fumigates and disinfects the premises, and I have much pleasure in testifying to the efficient way in which this is done.

During the year only one School has had to be closed in consequence of epidemic disease, viz. :—

Nunney School—12 days in July, for Mumps.

WATER SUPPLY.—The District is exceptionally well supplied with Water ; most of the Villages and Hamlets have a good public supply.

A constant look-out is kept on all Wells, and during the year I have had 17 samples of Well Water submitted for analysis ; only two of these proved to be bad Water, in one case the Well was cleaned out, and in the other the Well was closed.

A New Water Supply has been laid on to the hamlet of Clink from the Frome Urban District Council's main.

DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE WORKS.—The only Sewerage Extension made during the year was at Road, where the 9in. Sewer has been extended to receive Sewage previously drained into an old stone drain.

Experimental Sewage Works have been at work at Road and have proved most satisfactory. This scheme should be extended.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.—These have been constantly inspected, and no prosecutions have been necessary. A Register is kept.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—There is none in the District. Home Isolation is always arranged for with as little delay as possible. Disinfectants are freely supplied through the Inspectors, and subsequent fumigation is carried out by them, on my instruction.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—There are 34 Factories and Workshops in the District, viz. :—23 Bakehouses, 5 Laundries, and 6 Workshops ; these have been inspected 118 times. There are 32 Outworkers engaged in making clothing ; these have been inspected 64 times. No matter has arisen under the Act requiring prosecution or reference to H.M. Inspector.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.—One man was prosecuted and convicted for exposing for sale, Meat unfit for food.

INSPECTORS OF NUISANCES.—There are two, each with a Sub-District. Each furnishes a Report.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.—House-to-house Inspections continue to be made. The Dwellings of the Working Classes are, as a rule, in good sanitary condition, and when defects have been pointed out, the Owners have always readily remedied the same.

In conclusion, I beg to thank the Council and their Officers for the invariable courtesy and support I receive from them in my work for the Public Health.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A. W. DALBY,

Medical Officer of Health.

FROME

Rural District Council.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1906.

January 31st, 1907.

FRONTE :

H. DYKE, PRINTER, CATHERINE STREET.